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RESEARCH NOTES

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FOCI AND BASES OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR JOB PERFORMANCE

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Previous research has found that employee commitment and job performance are largely unrelated. However, prior work has not distinguished among individual foci (targets) and bases (motives) of commitment. We found, as expected, that commitment to supervisors was positively related to performance and was more strongly associated with performance than was commitment to organizations. Further, internalization of supervisors' and organizations' values was associated with performance but identification with these foci was not.

Employee commitment refers to the psychological attachment of workers to their workplaces (Allen & Meyer, 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Commitment to organizations is positively related to such desirable outcomes as job satisfaction (Bateman & Stasser, 1984; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), motivation (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), and attendance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Steers & Rhodes, 1978) and negatively related to such outcomes as absenteeism and turnover (Clegg, 1983; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). However, the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance is more tenuous. For instance, Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analysis showed that the confidence interval around the mean correlation between organizational commitment and performance included zero. Thus, Mathieu and Zajac concluded that "commitment has relatively little direct influence on performance in most instances" (1990: 184).

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The conclusion that commitment is largely unrelated to job performance is based upon the conventional view of commitment, which is that employee attachment involves "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday et al., 1982: 27). In contrast to this conventional view, a number of theorists and researchers have begun to view employee commitment as having multiple foci and bases. Foci of commitment are the individuals and groups to whom an employee is attached (Reichers, 1985). Bases of commitment are the motives engendering attachment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

It has been known for some time that employees can be committed to such foci as professions (Gouldner, 1958) and unions (Gordon, Beauvais, & Ladd, 1984), as well as to organizations (Mowday et al., 1982). Recent research has suggested that workers can also be differentially committed to occupations, top management, supervisors, co-workers, and customers (Becker, 1992; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Reichers, 1986). With respect to the bases of commitment, early research suggested that different motivational processes underlie single attitudes. According to Kelman (1958), compliance occurs when people adopt attitudes and behaviors in order to obtain specific rewards or to avoid specific punishments. Identification occurs when people adopt attitudes and behaviors in order to be associated with a satisfying, self-defining relationship with another person or group. Finally, internalization occurs when people adopt attitudes and behaviors because their content is congruent with the individuals' value systems. More recent research has demonstrated that employee organizational commitment, as a work-related attitude, can be predicated upon disparate motives (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Caldwell, Chatman, & O'Reilly, 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) and that distinguishing among individual foci and bases of commitment helps to explain variance in key dependent variables above and beyond that explained by commitment to organizations (Becker, 1992).

Although overall commitment to organizations appears to be largely unrelated to job performance, it is possible that there is a relationship between commitment as a multidimensional phenomenon and performance. For example, Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, and Jackson (1989) found that affective commitment (an individual's identification and involvement with an organization) had a correlation of .15 with a composite measure of performance but that continuance commitment (a tendency to engage in consistent lines of activity because of the perceived cost of doing otherwise) had a correlation of $-.25$ with performance. Although other research has not replicated these results (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), the findings of Meyer and his colleagues lead us to consider other ways that certain dimensions of commitment might be associated with performance. However, prior to addressing this issue, it is necessary to discuss the nature of employee commitment in a bit more depth.

THE STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

The previous section implies that employees typically distinguish among both foci and bases of commitment. However, the bulk of the research in

this area has relied upon samples of workers within single organizations (see, for instance, Becker [1992], Becker, Randall, and Riegel [1995], and O'Reilly and Chatman [1986]). The generalizability of these studies is thus open to question. Further, factor analytic support for the distinction between identification and internalization is mixed. O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) exploratory factor analysis supported the construct validity of the two constructs, as did exploratory factor analyses reported in several other studies (Becker, 1992; Harris, Hirschfield, Feild, & Mossholder, 1993; Vandenberg, Self, & Seo, 1994). However, items intended to assess identification and internalization sometimes load on a single factor (Becker et al., 1995; Caldwell et al., 1990; Sutton & Harrison, 1993). Given the theoretical rationale for distinguishing between identification and internalization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Jahoda, 1956; Kelman, 1958; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) and the abundance of evidence that identification and internalization are empirically distinct bases of attitudes (Kelman, 1961; Kelman & Eagly, 1965; Klein, 1967; Romer, 1979; Smith, 1976), it is probably premature to dismiss the distinction between identification and internalization. This conclusion is bolstered by the findings that the bases of commitment are differentially related to other variables (Becker & Billings, 1993; Harris et al., 1993; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

Nevertheless, the mixed findings do suggest that a closer, more rigorous look at the structure of employee commitment is needed. Therefore, in contrast to prior studies, this investigation examined the structure of employee commitment using a large multiorganizational sample and confirmatory factor analysis.¹ Given the above, we predicted

Hypothesis 1: Employees distinguish among both individual foci and individual bases of commitment.

EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE

In retrospect, it is not surprising that overall commitment to an organization is largely unrelated to employee performance. A cogent theory for why identification with and involvement in an organization should directly promote job performance has not been developed. However, it seems to us that norms regarding in-role behaviors are often established by such local foci as supervisors and work groups. If so, then commitment to local foci should lead to an acceptance of performance norms. Research linking group norms to employee behaviors (e.g., George, 1990; Mathieu & Kohler, 1990) supports this logic. Although some authors have argued that commitment to an organization mediates the effects of commitment

¹ Vandenberg and his colleagues (1994) also used confirmatory factor analysis to assess the structure of employee commitment. However, their study included employees within a single organization, did not include multiple foci of commitment, and did not include tests of differences in fit between models distinguishing among foci and bases of commitment and models not making these distinctions.

to other foci (Hunt & Morgan, 1994), field theory (Lewin, 1943) suggests that psychologically proximal factors in an environment should have a dominant effect on behavior. We suspect that, for most employees, local foci are psychologically more proximal than are global foci.

Further, because of their proximity and regular interaction with employees, local foci are probably more effective than global foci in monitoring, rewarding, and influencing employee behavior. Proximity and regular interaction also make it easier for employees to seek and receive feedback on actions consistent with the values and goals of local foci. Support for this logic exists in the findings of Meglino, Ravlin, and Adkins, who concluded that "the object of [employee value] congruence did not appear to be the cultural values of the organization, but the values of each worker's supervisor" (1989: 431). Given that monitoring and improving employee performance is an explicit function of supervision (Yukl, 1989), supervisors are more likely to actively create and promote performance norms than are work groups. Thus, in this study, we assessed commitment to organizations and supervisors. Given the above discussion, we predicted

Hypothesis 2: Overall commitment to supervisors is positively related to job performance and is more strongly linked to performance than is overall commitment to organizations.

Because the purpose of identification is to facilitate interpersonal relations, commitment based on identification should predict performance only if interpersonal relationships are contingent upon performance levels. Given that most organizational members are unlikely to make their relationship with a particular employee contingent upon performance, commitment based on identification would not generally be expected to increase performance. Even organizations and supervisors are unlikely to make their relationship with an employee entirely contingent upon the employee's performance, at least as long as performance meets some minimally acceptable standard. After all, as long as the employee is a member of an organization, the nature of work typically mandates that organizational members and supervisors maintain reasonably cordial relations. Thus, we would not expect commitment based on identification to be strongly tied to job performance.²

² Although this line of reasoning may seem contradictory to the theory of leader-member exchange, we do not believe our logic contravenes the theory. Theory and research on leader-member exchange suggest that factors other than subordinate performance (including personal compatibility between supervisor and subordinate and subordinate friendliness) substantially influence the relationships between supervisors and subordinates (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Yukl, 1989). Also, the literature on leader-member exchange demonstrates that once a subordinate is classified into an in-group or out-group, the relationship between the supervisor and subordinate depends on factors other than subordinate performance (Yukl, 1989). Thus, we believe that the theory of leader-member exchange does not require that employee identification be tied to performance.

In contrast, commitment based on the internalization of goals and values seems likely to predict performance.³ Goal-setting research demonstrates that commitment to specific, difficult goals leads to high performance (e.g., Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). Foci who value performance would presumably be more likely to set such goals. We suspect that nearly all organizations and supervisors value worker performance and that many identify performance objectives for employees. Thus, employees who are highly committed to their organizations and supervisors and who internalize the values and goals of these foci can be expected to perform at a higher level than employees with less commitment. Therefore,

Hypothesis 3: Commitment based on internalization is positively related to job performance and is more strongly linked to performance than is commitment based on identification.

METHODS

Survey Methodology and Respondents

Conducting a larger project, we sent questionnaires to all 1,803 members of the May 1993 graduating class of a large northwestern university. This questionnaire asked respondents for demographic information and assessed them with respect to their general tendencies to manage impressions and a number of other variables not relevant to the current study. Following three follow-up mailings, 1,217 usable questionnaires (67.5%) were returned to us through regular mail. Six months later (time 2), we sent another questionnaire to the 1,217 individuals who responded at time 1. This questionnaire measured the foci and bases of commitment. Following three follow-up mailings, 912 usable questionnaires were returned (a time 2 response rate of 74.9 percent and an overall response rate of 50.6 percent). Of these 912 individuals, 522 were employed full- or part-time. Because data were missing on some of the time 2 variables, 469 respondents (89.8 percent of employed members of the time 2 sample and 51.4 percent of all time 2 respondents) were used in the confirmatory factor analysis of commitment items.

One section of the time 2 questionnaire asked respondents for permission to contact their supervisors. Respondents who consented supplied us with the names and addresses of their supervisors; 355 supervisors were thus identified. We then sent a survey to these supervisors asking them to evaluate the job performance of the graduates. Following three follow-up mailings, 315 supervisors (88.7%) returned usable questionnaires. The minimum time

³ We did not include compliance as a basis of commitment in this research because it does not seem to be a basis of attachment to individuals or groups. The definition of compliance suggests that individuals scoring high on the construct are attached to potential tangible rewards, not to social entities. Further, empirical evidence has demonstrated that compliance is an across-foci construct and is often uncorrelated with other indexes of commitment (Becker, 1992; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

period separating time 2 respondent data from supervisory data was 18 weeks; the maximum interval was 28 weeks. Owing to missing data on some of the variables, 281 respondents (89 percent of those for whom we had supervisory data and 31 percent of time 2 respondents) were used in our analyses involving commitment and performance.

Respondents used in our analyses ranged in age from 21 to 60; the median age was 24 years, and 55.1 percent of the respondents were women. With respect to ethnicity, 85.5 percent of the respondents were Caucasian, 2.0 percent Hispanic, and 4.2 percent Asian; fewer than 2 percent classified themselves as Black or Native American. Undergraduate degrees were received by 93.8 percent of the respondents; 5.1 percent received professional degrees, and 1.1 percent received other graduate degrees. At time 1, 52.8 percent of the respondents were employed full-time and 14.4 percent were employed part-time; 1.7 percent were self-employed, and 18.1 percent were unemployed. At time 2, 61.3 percent of the respondents were employed full-time and 15.3 percent were employed part-time; 1.7 percent were self-employed, and 16.7 percent were unemployed. The typical respondent had been with his or her organization for 11.6 months at time 2, worked with six to ten other employees, and worked in a medium-sized company.⁴

Measures

Foci and bases of commitment. The time 2 questionnaire measured commitment to the organization and immediate supervisor using the items developed and used by Becker (1992). Five items were used to measure identification with respect to each focus: (1) "When someone criticizes [my supervisor, this organization], it feels like a personal insult," (2) "When I talk about [my supervisor, this organization], I usually say 'we' rather than 'they,'" (3) "[My supervisor's, this organization's] successes are my successes," (4) "When someone praises [my supervisor, this organization], it feels like a personal compliment," and (5) "I feel a sense of 'ownership' for [my supervisor, this organization]." Four items were used to measure internalization with respect to each focus: (1) "If the values of [my supervisor, this organization] were different, I would not be as attached to [my supervisor, this organization]," (2) "My attachment to [my supervisor, this organization] is primarily based on the similarity of my values and those represented by [my supervisor, the organization]," (3) "Since starting this job, my personal values and those of [my supervisor, this organization] have become more similar," and (4) "The reason I prefer [my supervisor, this organization] to others is because of what [he or she, it] stands for, that is, [his or her, its]

⁴ To examine the effects of the drop-out rate, we compared respondents used in our analyses to the rest of the sample (respondents and nonrespondents), nonrespondents (i.e., those for whom no surveys were returned), all other respondents (i.e., those who returned the time 1 survey, time 2 survey, or both), and other time 2 respondents. Respondents used in the analyses and other subsets of the sample were very similar. Differences, where they existed, tended to be quite small.

values." Responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

We developed four scales based on the confirmatory factor analysis described below: supervisor-related identification, supervisor-related internalization, organizational identification, and organizational internalization. Scores on these scales were derived by averaging across items. We calculated overall commitment to a supervisor by summing across the supervisor-related identification and supervisor-related internalization items. Similarly, overall commitment to an organization was calculated by summing across the organizational identification and internalization items. Thus, parallel items were used to assess overall commitment to each focus; that is, the wordings of the items were identical except for the specification of the focus (supervisor versus organization). We indexed overall identification-based commitment by summing across the supervisor-related identification and organizational identification items and measured overall internalization-based commitment by summing across the supervisor-related internalization and organizational internalization items.

Performance. Job performance was evaluated by the respondents' immediate supervisors. Performance was assessed via six items. The following three items were assessed along a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "always": (1) "completed work in a timely and effective manner," (2) "performed high-quality work," and (3) "completed tasks in an unsatisfactory manner" (reverse-coded). The remaining items were assessed along a seven-point scale ranging from "unsatisfactory" to "extremely satisfactory": (4) "quality of work," (5) "quantity of work," and (6) "overall performance." Factor analyses indicated that the six items loaded clearly on one factor. Therefore, we computed scale scores by summing across the appropriate items. Complete information on scale development is available upon request.

Impression management. There is evidence that subordinates can and do manage the impressions of their supervisors (Deluga, 1991; Fandt & Ferris, 1990). Because we assessed performance via supervisory ratings, and because these ratings could conceivably be affected by respondents' general tendency to manage impressions, we decided to statistically control for respondents' impression management. We considered this a particularly important decision in light of our interest in the relationship between commitment to supervisor and performance.

To measure respondents' tendency to manage impressions, we used the 20-item scale developed by Paulhus (1984, 1988). This measure was included in our time 1 questionnaire. Examples of items are (1) "I never cover up my mistakes" and (2) "I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick" (reverse-coded). Responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from "not true" to "very true." Factor analyses demonstrated that all the items loaded on one factor. Thus, we computed scale scores by summing across all 20 items. Complete information on scale development is available upon request.

Demographic variables. The time 1 questionnaire asked the respondents about their age and gender, and the time 2 questionnaire asked respondents how long they had worked for their current employers. These variables were selected for inclusion in our analyses because prior research has tied them to commitment phenomena (Fry & Greenfeld, 1980; Luthans, McCaul, & Dodd, 1985; Morrow & McElroy, 1987). Thus, we treated these factors as control variables.

Analysis Strategy

Structure of employee commitment. We used LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) to conduct confirmatory factor analyses of the structure of responses to the commitment items. To determine whether employees in our sample distinguished between both foci and bases of commitment, we developed four models: (1) a one-factor model specifying a single underlying construct, (2) a two-factor model specifying identification and internalization as underlying constructs but ignoring the foci of commitment, (3) a two-factor model specifying commitment to the supervisor and organization as underlying constructs but ignoring the bases of commitment, and (4) a four-factor model specifying both foci and bases of commitment (i.e., identification and internalization vis à vis both supervisors and organizations). We then compared these models using both goodness-of-fit indexes and significance tests of nested models. We opted to use the root-mean-square residual, normed fit index, comparative fit index, and the incremental fit index as goodness-of-fit measures because evidence suggests that they are unbiased and relatively independent of sample size (Bentler, 1990; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; McDonald & Marsh, 1990). Our decision rules were that, to indicate a good fit, the root-mean-square residual had to be equal to or less than .05 and the other fit indexes had to be greater than .85.

Commitment and performance. To fully examine the relationship between commitment and performance, we ran four regression analyses. The first regressed performance on the control variables (the demographic factors and impression management). This regression allowed us to examine the variance in performance accounted for by the control variables individually and as a set. The results of this analysis were also used as a point of reference for comparing the amount of variance accounted for by sets of variables containing both the control variables and different forms of commitment. If sets of variables distinguishing among foci of commitment, bases of commitment, or both did not explain variance in performance beyond that explained by the control variables alone, then the distinctions among different forms of commitment would be less meaningful.

Second, we regressed performance on a set of variables including the control factors and overall commitment to organization and supervisor (disregarding the bases of commitment). This regression allowed us to (1) determine if the foci of commitment, as a set, explained variance above and beyond that explained by the control variables and (2) test Hypothesis 2. Third, we regressed performance on a set of variables including the control factors and

commitment based on identification and internalization (disregarding the foci of commitment). This regression allowed us to (1) determine if the bases of commitment, as a set, explained variance above and beyond that explained by the control variables and (2) test Hypothesis 3. Finally, we regressed performance on a set of variables including the control factors and variables distinguishing among both foci and bases of commitment. This regression allowed us to determine (1) if the foci and bases of commitment, as a set, explained variance above and beyond that explained by the control variables and (2) whether distinctions among both foci and bases of commitment are useful in explicating the relationship between commitment and performance.

RESULTS

Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics and alphas for all variables. Because the distribution of performance was negatively skewed and “leptokurtic,” we transformed performance data by cubing each respondent’s score. This procedure produced a more normally distributed set of scores appropriate for use in the analyses discussed below.

Structure of Employee Commitment

Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 states that employees distinguish among both foci and bases of commitment. Table 2 contains the goodness-of-fit values of each of the four confirmatory factor analysis models. As can be seen, only the four-factor model (distinguishing among both individual foci and individual bases of commitment) provides a relatively good fit to the data. In addition, the four-factor model provided a significantly better fit to the data than the model distinguishing among neither foci nor bases ($\chi^2_{\text{diff}} [6 \text{ df}] = 1,493.56, p < .01$) and also fit better than either the two-factor model specifying foci only ($\chi^2_{\text{diff}} [5 \text{ df}] = 603.98, p < .01$) or the two-factor model specifying bases only ($\chi^2_{\text{diff}} [5 \text{ df}] = 1,165.19, p < .01$). These findings support Hypothesis 1.

Commitment and Performance

Hypothesis 2. This hypothesis states that overall commitment to supervisors is positively related to performance and is more strongly linked to performance than is overall commitment to organizations. As Table 1 shows, overall commitment to supervisors is significantly and positively related to performance ($r = .16, p < .05$). This finding supports the first part of the hypothesis. Consistent with prior research, overall commitment to organizations is not significantly correlated with performance ($r = .07, \text{n.s.}$).

We used simultaneous regression analysis to determine if, after the control variables were partialled out, (1) the relationship between overall commitment to supervisor and performance remained and (2) overall commitment to supervisor was more strongly associated with performance than was overall commitment to organization. The results are shown in Table 3, step 2a. After controlling for demographic variables, impression management, and overall commitment to the organization, we found a significant standardized regression weight for overall commitment to supervisors ($\beta = .18, p < .05$). This

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations^a

Variables	Means	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	26.26	5.74													
2. Gender	1.43	0.50	-.07												
3. Tenure	12.19	30.89	.58	-.12											
4. Impression management	4.32	0.87	.04	-.10	-.02										
5. Supervisor-related identification	3.76	1.30	-.06	-.01	-.05	.08	(.85)								
6. Supervisor-related internalization	4.14	1.42	-.04	-.16	.03	.11	.65	(.84)							
7. Organizational identification	4.81	1.41	-.10	.01	-.07	.05	.53	.34	(.89)						
8. Organizational internalization	4.40	1.44	-.04	-.10	-.06	.08	.48	.56	.72	(.88)					
9. Supervisor	3.92	1.23	-.06	-.08	-.02	.11	.92	.89	.49	.57	(.89)				
10. Organization	4.63	1.33	-.08	-.04	-.07	.07	.55	.47	.94	.91	.57	(.92)			
11. Identification	4.29	1.19	-.10	.00	-.07	.08	.86	.55	.89	.70	.79	.86	(.89)		
12. Internalization	4.29	1.26	-.04	-.14	-.02	.11	.63	.87	.61	.89	.81	.79	.71	(.88)	
13. Performance	140.58	50.21	-.06	-.12	-.01	-.05	.14	.16	.09	.04	.16	.07	.14	.10	(.91)

^a N = 281 (listwise deletion of missing values). Gender is coded 0 = woman, 1 = man. Correlations with absolute values greater than .11 are significant at .05. Numbers in parentheses are Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

TABLE 2
Results of Confirmatory Factor Analyses^a

Model	χ^2	df	RMR	NFI	CFI	IFI
One-factor	2,146.92	135	.13	.59	.61	.61
Two-factor, bases only	1,818.55	134	.12	.66	.67	.67
Two-factor, foci only	1,257.34	134	.08	.76	.78	.78
Four-factor, foci and bases	653.36	129	.05	.88	.90	.90

^a N = 469 (listwise deletion). RMR = root-mean-square residual, NFI = normed fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, IFI = incremental fit index.

result demonstrates that a positive relationship between commitment to supervisors and performance remains after other factors are controlled. A test of the difference between the regression weight for overall commitment to a supervisor ($\beta = .18$) and the regression weight for overall commitment to an organization ($\beta = -.03$) shows that this difference is significant, t (274 df) = 1.99, $p < .05$. This finding supports Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 states that commitment based on internalization is positively related to performance and is more strongly linked to performance than is commitment based on identification. As Table 1 shows, commitment based on internalization (without regard to foci) is positively but only marginally correlated with in-role performance ($r = .10$, $p < .10$). This result offers weak support for the first part of the hypothesis. Interestingly, commitment based on identification is significantly correlated with in-role performance ($r = .14$, $p < .05$).

We used simultaneous regression analysis to determine if, after we had partialled out the control variables, (1) a significant relationship between commitment based on internalization and performance remained and (2) commitment based on internalization was more strongly associated with performance than commitment based on identification. Step 2b of Table 3 shows the results. After demographic variables, impression management, and commitment based on identification were controlled, the standardized regression weight for commitment based on internalization was not significant ($\beta = -.01$, n.s.). Further, the regression weight for commitment based on internalization ($\beta = -.01$) was not greater than the regression weight for commitment based on identification ($\beta = .15$). These findings do not support Hypothesis 3.⁵

Ancillary Analyses

Distinguishing among both foci and bases of performance. The findings reported in the previous section did not support Hypothesis 3. To further determine whether distinctions among both individual foci and bases of

⁵ We also conducted regression analyses without controlling for demographic variables and impression management. The conclusions were identical to the tests including the control variables.

TABLE 3
Results of Regression Analyses^a

Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	F	β	t	β_r	R_r^2
Step 1: Control variables	.021		1.51				.021
Age				-.07	-0.98	-.06	
Gender				-.13	-2.08*	-.11	
Tenure				.01	0.20	.01	
Impression management				-.06	-0.96	-.05	
Step 2a: Foci of commitment	.047	.026	3.74*				.046
Age				-.06	-0.82	-.05	
Gender				-.11	-1.89 [†]	-.10	
Tenure				.01	0.13	.01	
Impression management				-.07	-1.24	-.07	
Supervisor				.18	2.45*	.15	
Organization				-.03	-0.44	-.02	
Step 2b: Bases of commitment	.040	.019	2.71*				.039
Age				-.06	-0.83	-.05	
Gender				-.13	-2.08*	-.11	
Tenure				.02	0.25	.01	
Impression management				-.07	-1.13	-.06	
Identification				.15	1.72 [†]	.12	
Internalization				-.01	-0.15	.01	
Step 2c: Foci and bases of commitment	.061	.040	2.90*				.059
Age				-.04	-0.55	-.04	
Gender				-.12	-1.94 [†]	-.11	
Tenure				-.01	-0.09	.00	
Impression management				-.07	-1.25	-.07	
Supervisor-related identification				.04	0.48	.06	
Supervisor-related internalization				.18	1.99*	.13	
Organizational identification				.15	1.60	.10	
Organizational internalization				-.20	-2.02*	-.13	

^a $N = 281$ (listwise deletion of missing values). ΔR^2 is the amount of variance in performance accounted for by the sets of commitment variables over and above the control variables. β_r is the regression coefficient from the ridge regressions, and R_r^2 is the amount of variance explained in the ridge regressions.

[†] $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

commitment are necessary to explain the commitment-performance relationship, we regressed performance on a set of variables distinguishing among both foci and bases of commitment. The results are shown in Table 3, step 2c. With the demographic variables, impression management, and other forms of commitment controlled, commitment based on internalization vis-à-vis a supervisor is positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$). Surprisingly, with these variables controlled, organizational internalization is significantly and *negatively* related to performance ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$). Further, comparing steps 2b and 2c in Table 3 clearly shows that failing to distinguish among foci of commitment obscures the finding that it

is internalization, not identification, vis-à-vis supervisors and organizations that accounts for unique variance in performance.

Ridge regressions. A number of the independent variables in our prior analyses were significantly and rather strongly intercorrelated. This pattern raised the issue of multicollinearity and the accompanying concern that some of our estimates of R^2 and regression weights might be imprecise (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Therefore, we recalculated these estimates using ridge regression, a technique designed to remedy multicollinearity problems by modifying the method of least squares (Myers, 1990; Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner, 1990).

The results appear in the right-hand columns of Table 3. Comparing R^2 and R^2_r in this table makes it apparent that multicollinearity had very little effect on the amount of variance in performance explained by the various sets of variables. Comparing β and β_r for the simultaneous regressions also shows that multicollinearity did not seem to greatly affect the regression coefficients. With ridge regression, ordinary inference procedures are not applicable and exact distributional properties are not known (Neter et al., 1990). Therefore, significance tests for ridge estimates (R^2_r and β_r) are not available. Nevertheless, the relative magnitudes of the ridge estimates appear consistent with our previous analyses and tend to support our hypotheses. Most important, the ridge regressions indicate that multicollinearity was probably not a serious problem in the prior analyses.

DISCUSSION

One important result of this work is confirmation that employees in many organizations distinguish between commitment to supervisors and commitment to the organizations and between identification and internalization as bases of commitment to these two foci. This in itself is a meaningful finding because it validates the multidimensional view of commitment in a manner more rigorous than that characteristic of prior research. We hope that this finding encourages researchers and practitioners to take a more differentiated view of employee commitment.

In addition, prior research has concluded that the link between commitment and performance is largely nonexistent (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday et al., 1982). Results of the current study challenge this conclusion by demonstrating that certain forms of commitment are related to performance in predictable and meaningful ways. Although we found that overall commitment to organizations was uncorrelated with performance, we also found, as expected, that overall commitment to supervisors was positively and significantly associated with performance. Further, as predicted, commitment to supervisors was more strongly linked to performance than was commitment to organizations. Also, commitment based on internalization of supervisory and organizational values was related to performance (albeit in opposite directions for the two foci), and commitment based on identification with these foci was not.

One implication of these results is that researchers and human resource professionals concerned with employee performance should focus their efforts on commitment to supervisors rather than on that to organizations. For instance, previous authors have identified propensity to become committed to an organization as a variable that could be used in hiring employees (Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992). Our results suggest that propensity to become committed to a supervisor (especially a propensity based on internalizing the supervisor's values) would be a more valid predictor of performance. As another example, prior research has suggested that organizational commitment can be enhanced via changes in job design and other organizational attributes (e.g., Colarelli, Dean, & Konstans, 1987; Fried & Ferris, 1987). Our results suggest that enhancing commitment to a supervisor's goals and values—via leadership training, socialization, and team building, for instance—would affect performance to a greater extent than would increasing commitment to an organization.

This study also suggests that commitment based on internalization rather than identification is more relevant to job performance. Widely used measures such as the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire and the Affective Commitment Scale emphasize commitment based on identification (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Researchers interested in predicting and explaining performance may be well advised to avoid such measures and to instead use instruments designed to index commitment based on internalization.

A final implication of our results pertains to the theory of relations between commitment and behavior. In the current study, the effects of commitment to supervisors were *not* mediated by commitment to organizations: Commitment to supervisors was related to performance even after commitment to organizations was partialled from the relationship. This pattern is contrary to the theory of previous authors (Hunt & Morgan, 1994) but consistent with our theory that local foci are psychologically more proximal to employees and, therefore, have a greater impact on behavior in organizations. Future research should examine this theory with respect to different dependent variables (e.g., absenteeism, turnover, citizenship behaviors).

One surprising finding was that, with internalization of supervisory goals and values controlled for, organizational internalization was *negatively* related to performance. We speculate that this relationship can be explained by the conflicting values and goals sometimes held by supervisors and organizations (Reichers, 1985, 1986) and by our measure of performance. To the extent that organizations and supervisors hold identical values, internalizing a supervisor's values is the same as internalizing an organization's values. However, to the extent that the two sets of values conflict, partialing out the supervisor's values leaves those organizational values that are not consistent with those of the supervisor. Therefore, once internalization of the supervisor's values is statistically controlled, it is not surprising that supervisory ratings of performance are negatively related to internalization of the organization's values. Supervisors can be expected to give lower ratings to employ-

ees who hold values that conflict with their own. Because this explanation is supposition and cannot be tested with the current data, future research should further examine the nature and extent of value conflicts between supervisors and organizations. In addition, because supervisory ratings may reflect some degree of bias, we suggest that a replication of our results using multiple performance criteria would be useful.

These caveats being understood, our findings should not be impugned on the basis of our measurement of performance. For example, one might assert that commitment to supervisors, but not organizations, was related to performance because of response bias in supervisor ratings. However, if supervisor ratings were biased toward employees who manipulated their supervisors' impression of commitment, then controlling for employees' tendencies to manage impressions should have removed this effect. Further, if other supervisory biases accounted for the observed relationships between commitment and performance, then supervisor ratings should have been related to both supervisor-related identification and internalization. In fact with other variables controlled, supervisor-related identification was unrelated to performance ratings.

The tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3 involved comparing the relationships of different types of commitment with performance. As Cooper and Richardson (1986) noted, in comparing the strength of relationships among variables it is important that the underlying constructs be equally well measured. We used measures that were closely linked to the definitions of the major forms of commitment, and data on all the measures were gathered via an identical process (i.e., questionnaire administration). Also, items measuring commitment to supervisors and organizations were parallel in structure (the same items were used, with only the target of commitment differing between the two sets of items). Thus, we believe we have taken reasonable steps to ensure procedural equivalence with respect to the key variables. All of our commitment scales were reliably measured, scores on each measure were approximately normally distributed, and the variability of the scales was quite similar. These characteristics provide support for the distributional equivalence of the variables. Together, the elements of evidence for procedural and distributional equivalence in this study lead us to assert that the tests of our hypotheses, although certainly not perfect, were reasonably impartial.

Nevertheless, the generalizability of our results is unlikely to be universal. Although our respondents were employed in many different organizations, the sample was composed of young, recent college graduates, most of whom were white and had not been with their companies for very long. Also, although the respondents used in our analyses and the rest of the sample were similar in many respects, there were several differences (see our fourth footnote). These differences were generally quite small but, regardless, create the possibility that some of our findings are not generalizable to our entire sample.

A final issue regards the amount of variance in job performance explained by employee commitment. After controlling for certain demographic factors

and impression management, we found that the commitment variables as a set accounted for 4 percent of the variability in performance. Although this is only a modest amount of variance explained, the issue of degree of explained variance can be misleading (Campbell, 1990). Although we would not go as far as Campbell in calling this a "false issue" (1990: 56), we do agree with his point that variance explained must be interpreted within the realm of a given research domain. Had the purpose of this study been to explain variance in performance, we would certainly have included a whole host of variables—cognitive ability and goal difficulty, for instance—not contained in the present investigation. However, the objectives of this study were to examine the links between different types of commitment and performance and to test three specific hypotheses. We argue that because these are important objectives in the realm of research on employee commitment, our findings are pertinent and valuable to the literature on commitment-performance relationships.

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